

Lithuania/Poland

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A. R. Hall Feb 310 hist.

Polish-Lithuanian Proposed Boundaries
in Vilna District. (1919-1923)

January, 1919-July, 1920 - Warfare among Lithuania, Poland and Soviet Russia for the Vilna district, following German evacuation.

July 12, 1920 - Lithuanian army having taken Vilna, Lithuania and the Soviets concluded peace treaty at Moscow. The Vilna district was conceded to Lithuania. Article 2 of the treaty delimited the boundary and laid down principles to be followed by the demarcation commission. (1) (2) (3).

September 20, 1920 - League of Nations Council established provisional demarcation line between Polish and Lithuanian forces after reference of the dispute to that body September 5. This was the northern part of the so-called Curzon line proposed by Supreme Council December 8, 1919. Poles failed to abide by this arrangement. (4).

October 7, 1920 - Control Commission appointed by League in attempt to settle the dispute arranged a temporary modus vivendi at Suwalki. The line separating the two forces was to be the Curzon line in part, thence running toward Bastvny, near Lida. (5). Polish irregulars under Zeligowski violated this agreement two days later by taking Vilna. Following this, an attempt was made to arrange for a plebiscite in the area under League supervision, but Lithuania would not agree.

November 29, 1920 - An armistice protocol concluded under auspices of the League Military Control Commission, Kovno, provided for a neutral zone between the two armies, leaving Vilna to Poland. (6)

May-September, 1921 - Attempts to settle the dispute by direct negotiation between the two countries at Brussels and Geneva, presided over by Hymans, representing League of Nations.

May 20, 1921 - Hymans proposed federation between Poland and Lithuania somewhat like Austro-Hungarian. Lithuania to be composed of two autonomous cantons, Kovno and Vilna, the boundary between them being close to the neutral zone. The boundary of Lithuania on the east would have been close to the Treaty of Riga line as agreed upon by Poland and Soviet Russia. (7) (8). After this was rejected by the two parties, Hymans advanced another somewhat similar plan, but this too was not acceptable.

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March 15, 1923 - Conference of Ambassadors recognized a boundary between Lithuania and Poland proposed by a League Council act of February 3, 1923 doing away with the neutral zone. This line gave Vilna to Poland. From boundary of East Prussia to above Neman River this was the same as the Curzon line. (9). This decision was not accepted by Lithuania, however, and the two countries did not establish diplomatic relations until 1938.

Bibliography

- (1) Peace Treaty and Protocol between Lithuania and Soviet Russia, July 12, 1920. LTS 3(1921) pp. 106-137.
- (2) H.W.V. Temperley, A History of the Peace Conference of Paris. Vol. 6, pp. 302-310. Outlines history of the Vilna dispute from 1919 to 1922.
- (3) Robert H. Lord, "Lithuania and Poland," Foreign Affairs, N. 1, no. 4 (June 15, 1923) pp. 38-58. This carries the story to 1923. Map, p. 55 shows all the lines proposed or used, 1919-1923. (Enlarged photostat of this in Mrs. S. file 310 fab.)
- (4) Temperley, Vol. 6, p. 309.
- (5) Agreement between Lithuania and Poland, Suwalki, October 7, 1920 LTS 8 (1922) p. 181.
- (6) LTS. 9 (1922) 64-67.
- (7) League of Nations, Dispute between Lithuania and Poland, Report by M. Hymans on Conferences at Brussels, April 20-June 3, 1921. C.95 M.54.1921.VII. (Geneva, June 10, 1921)
- (8) Republique de Lithuanie, Ministre des Affaires Etrangere, Conflit Polono-Lithuanien. Question de Vilna, 1918-1924. (Kaunas, 1924) This contains maps similar to the one in Lord's article.
- (9) Decision of Conference of Ambassadors, Paris, March 23, 1923-DCR 7608.60M15/40. (Copy in Mrs. Saucerman's file 310 fab). c